どんな理屈が咲くのか
楽しみだねェ…

JETS COMICS

当て屋の椿

ツバキ

Ateya no Tsubaki

1

川下寛次

Kanji Kawashita

川下寛次

白泉社
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華やかな江戸の街で次々と起こる、
謎の殺人事件。
その裏に潜む真実を
「当て屋」の椿（ツバキ）が捜し当てる…!!

奇想天外な
大江戸吉原ミステリー、始まる。

Ateya no Tsubaki
Kanji Kawashita

ヤングアニマル ANIMAL
毎月第2・第4金曜日発売

ヤングアニマル Aoda 嵐
毎月第1金曜日発売

People are saying about extravagant things

Chapter 1 - Tsubaki. Show up

When wearing fine clothes and walking gracefully, a woman is beautiful

HAA

Indeed,

HAA

Like the good fortune of being born a man, or asking to become an apprentice

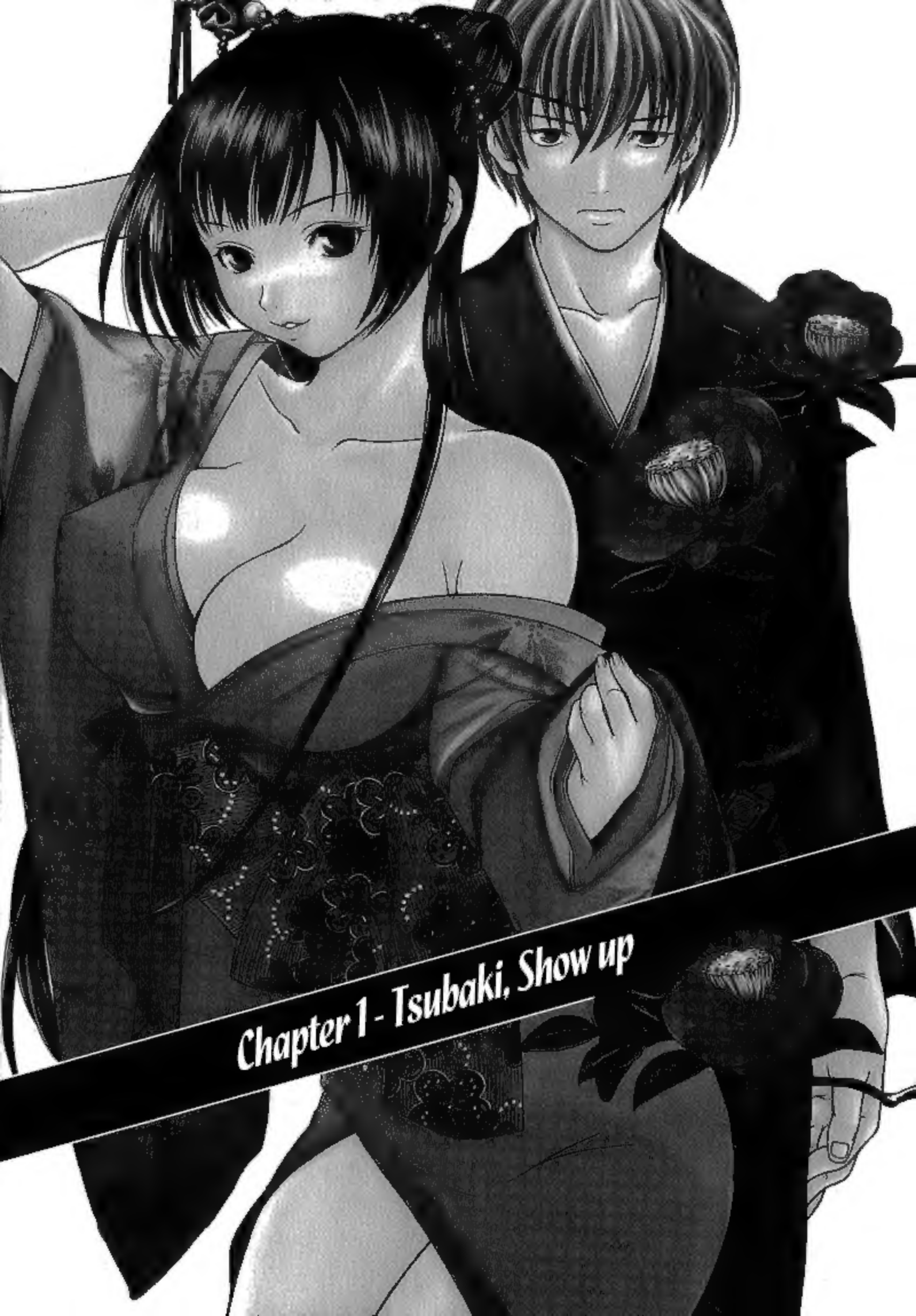
However,

What beyond my brush are...

Her beast-like howling, her disheveled hair

Her gnashing teeth while standing on tiptoe

HER DEVILISH AND UNCHANGING EXPRESSION, WHILE SHE IS WRIGGLING AND SHAKING.
Ahhh!



Chapter 1 - Tsubaki, Show up

THANK YOU VERY MUCH.
WELL THEN, I'LL EXCUSE MYSELF

AHN!
WHY SO FAST, SENSEI?
IF IT'S ONLY THAT MUCH, THIS WOMAN WON'T BE SATISFIED.
SHEESH, IT'S BECAUSE RURIMARU...!
RIGHT, ETSU?

I'M AN ARTIST ...
HAHA, AS EXPECTED FROM THE MASTER OF HEAVENLY SHUNGA, HOUSEN-SENSEI!!
YOU KNOW, ALL OTHER ARTISTS ARE TROUBLED WITH THEIR AROUSAL, THEY CAN'T DRAW PROPERLY.

T/N: Kabuki is the highly stylized classical Japanese dance-drama known for the stylization of its drama and for the elaborate make-up worn by some of its performers

T/N: Shunga are Japanese erotic paintings that were made from the 16th to 18th centuries

T/N: Notice that in that era, Kabuki actors are often work as gigolos (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shunga)

WELL THEN, PLEASE EXCUSE M-
.....
ETSU, ONCE AGAIN, YOUR CHARM HAS MADE MY THING ACHES
DO YOU PLAN TO PUT ME THROUGH A HARD TIME IN ANOTHER GIRL'S PLACE?
OH YOU, RURIMARU-
HUH?
NOW NOW, SENSEI. WHY DON'T YOU JOIN US?
YOU'RE DISTURBED WITH THE RUMOUR, AREN'T YOU?
LEAVE ME OUT FROM THIS-
HEY... LET GO!!
HOW DETESTFUL, EH?
DIDN'T THEY SAY THAT YOU SECRETLY BRIBED A HIGH-CLASS GEISHA?
DRAWING A PICTURE OF AN AMATEUR WOMAN
!!

LOOK, AREN'T THEY SOFT?
AHN
THEY'RE SOFT.
BUT, THAT MATTER IS...
WELL NOW, COULD THIS ONE ENDURE-
...!!
WHOA!
OH?
AH
ムニュ

NO WONDER.
WELL, TO THINK THAT HIS IS NO GOOD...
I USED TO THINK THAT THAT SO-CALLED YOUNG SHUNGA MASTER IS A GREAT MAN...
WAIT, WAIT
DO YOU THINK I'M NOT CHARMING ENOUGH-
WHAT WAS THAT !?
HMMM
MR. PITIFUL

WHY THE HASTE? YOU CAN'T ENDURE IT ANY LONGER?
OH, SENSEI.
I CAN ONLY SEE THAT WOMEN "EAT" MEN
BUT FOR ME,
IT'S OFTEN SAID, THAT "MEN ARE WOMEN-EATERS"...
I'M BAD WITH WOMEN.
THAT'S WHY...
I- IT SEEMS I WAS INTRUDING
YOUR MAKING FUN OF HIM, IS QUITE A SIGHT TOO...
IT'S COMMON FOR AN ARTIST TO BE AN ECCENTRIC
HE SURPRISED ME, THAT HOUSEN-SENSEI...

REALLY?
I ALREADY LOST MY HEART TO YOU, ETSU.
RURIMARU, ARE YOU FINE IF I SLEEP WITH SOME OTHER GUY!?
OOPS.
Ah
Aah
Rurimaru...
Ah
Ahh
Ah
Ah

OH NO, IT'S GETTING LATE.
BUT, IT'LL BE TROUBLESOME IF FATHER CATCH ME
MAYBE IT'LL BE BETTER IF I TAKE A PALANQUIN TILL IT'S A LITTLE CLOSER TO THE HOME
HUH?
OOH
I BY NO MEANS WANT TO BE SEPARATED FROM RURIMARU...

T/N Palanquin is a covered litter carried on poles on the shoulders of four or more bearers, formerly used in eastern Asia, but in this case, she's referring to a norimono

Gah!
ドーン
Aaa
Aa

AHA

AHA
HAHA
AHA
Drinking water vendor, perfume maker,
are the common occupations in this city, whose population exceed one hundred and ten thousands.
当て屋
どおかん
But as for someone who would hung such a silly signboard,
I know no other one

I CAME TO HEAR THAT THERE'S SOMEONE WHO COULD FIND ANYTHING IN THIS ROW HOUSE
BUT THIS PERSON'S JUST PLAIN SUSPICIOUS
.....
LET'S
AH!
I FORGOT SOMETHING.

AH!
AREN'T YOU THIS ROW HOUSE'S STAR? THE FAMOUS MASTER OF SHUNGA, HOUSEN SEN-
YOU'RE IN THE WAY
WHAT'S WITH YOU?
.....
!
?
NOO OOO O!
SOMEBODY ....!
MOOOOO! THIS PERVERT!!
.....
THIS PERSON WANTS ME TO BECOME A MODEL FOR HIS SHUNGA!! THE PAY'S 1 RYOU AT BEST...
BECAUSE I HAVEN'T PAID THE RENT YET...
?

T/N: A Ryou was a gold piece in pre-Meiji Japan

YOU'VE GOT IT WRONG !!!
I DIDN'T ASK YOU!!
IF IT'S FOR 2 RYOU.
NUU!?
SHE'S EXTORTING ME!!
WHAT'S WITH THIS WOMAN!!!
THE HECK IS THE "ROW HOUSE'S STAR"? I COULDN'T BE AFFECTED! WOMEN ARE THE SEEKERS OF OPPORTUNITY!! THEY ARE THIEVES!
FREAVOICE
A CUSTOMER, MAYBE?
HMM!
ANIMAL LIVES IN THE SAME ROW HOUSE!!

THIS HOPE-SELLER TSUBAKI WHO CAN FIND ANYTHING HAPPENS TO BE FREE!
♪
YOU'RE IN LUCK!!
COME ON, STAND UP
SO?
N-NO, NOTHING I'M JUST PASSING BY .
SO THE SO-CALLED HOPE-SELLER IS A WOMAN!!
AS IF I'D TRUST SUCH SUSPICIOUS WOMAN!!
I ain't letting you run away
SO?
LET ME GO!!
!!!!
YOU...
.....

YOU'VE COME TO CONTACT WITH A PERSON'S LIFE AND DEATH, RIGHT?
I KNEW IT.
HUH?
COME, LET'S TALK ABOUT IT OVER A MEAL.
OF COURSE YOU'VE GOT MY FEE, DON'T YOU, MASTER OF SHUNGA?
WELCOME

.....
CAN YOU TELL ABOUT THE "PERSON'S LIFE AND DEATH" MATTER?
HOW,
PLEASE GIVE ME SAKE AND APPETIZER.
ALRIGHT
FIRST,
SENSEI, WHEN YOU SAW ME BEFORE, YOU TRIED TO RUN AWAY, RIGHT?
WHEN ASKING A FAVOUR, YOU NEED TO "PRUDENTLY CHOOSE THE PERSON"
HOW?
AH?
IF THAT WERE INCORRECT, I WOULD LET YOU GO, THOUGH.
WELL
SECOND,
IF MY SPECULATION IS CORRECT, IT'LL BE A BIG JOB WITH A LOT OF MONEY.

♪
Looks like she wasn't letting the customer(I) go in order to caught him(me) in her trap
Do you think you're clever? Do you think you're cunning??
I WAS SET UP!!
You mistook it from a lucky person (aturiya), right!?
GODDAMMIT!! I REGRET IT!! DARN!!
I was too naive!!
YEEEESSSS?
?
SO?
WHAT DO YOU WANT ME TO SEARCH?
HEY, WHY ARE YOU ANGRY?
This isn't a simple matter.
At any rate, it will be impossible for her.

This isn't like looking for a lost purse or a missing dog.
DRINKING AS IF IT'S SO APPETISING
GULP
Rather than looking for something to blame,
let's just treat her a meal, and get over with it.
I'LL LAUGH AT YOU IN A LARGE VOICE: "WHAT THE HELL IS A HOPE-SELLER!?"
WELL, IT'S FINE WHEN THE TIME COMES
HEY, WHAT ARE YOU LAUGHING ABOUT?
I feel uneasy
COME ON, TELL ME
YEAH, I'LL BE SURE TO TELL YOU!"
AS MANY TIME AS YOU LIKE"
Earlier this morning,
HAA
HAA
HAA
Rurimaru the kabuki actor was arrested
said the notice sent by the shunga publisher.

WRONG!
WRONG!
IT WASN'T ME!!
PLEASE BELIEVE ME!!
Last night, Etsu, who became a model for shunga with Rurimaru
was murdered
Suspected to be entangled in a blind love, Rurimaru was then arrested
.....
SENSEI, HOW ABOUT YOU?

WHAT?
SENSEI, AREN'T YOU ALSO SUSPECTED?
LAST NIGHT, YOU WERE THERE WITH THEM.
YOU'RE REALLY A RUDE WOMAN, HUH!?
IT WASN'T ME!
RURIMARU ALSO SAID THAT, DIDN'T HE?
I-
DON'T YOU ALSO HAVE SOMETHING TO THE POINT THAT YOU WANT TO KILL A WOMAN?
" UGH "
IT HITS THE NAIL, HUH?
SENSEI, YOU'RE UNPOPULAR WITH WOMAN, RIGHT!?
I won't be provoked, no matter what this woman say
I won't be provoked!!

HMM?
SO, DO YOU WANT TO FIND THE CRIMINAL* FOR RURI-MARU'S SAKE?
A/N: Murderer
WRONG
I don't know that guy
I think I must've been really mad back there.
It would've been better if I hadn't seen that.
Such a strong willed daughter,
he must have treasured her very much.
ETSU...
GIVE IT BACK!!
PLEASE GIVE HERS BACK!!
ETSU
HERS IS STILL WITH THE CRIMINAL RIGHT?
ETSU...
It's the first time, I saw an adult cry like that.

A/N #1 a station similar to a modern police box A/N #2 a government official who works in civil service

THIS ISN'T THAT SIMPLE OF A MATTER

Her ear
was cut off

Even the civil service' people were creeped out.
Nobody would volunteer for the search.
THE OFFICIALS HAD ALSO LOOKED FOR IT, BUT THEY COULDN'T FIND IT. IT'S LIKELY THAT THE CRIMINAL BROUGHT IT WITH HIM.

CRUNCH
I'm sure this woman too will run away from this

NEVERTHELESS, THIS IS URGENT IT'LL BE UNPLEASANT IF THE EAR DECAYS, RIGHT?
THE DEAL IS, I'LL GET THE FEE IF WE GET THE EAR BACK, IS THAT OKAY WITH YOU?
SO THE CRIMINAL STABBED HER RECKLESSLY AND GOT RID OF THE EAR, HUH? FUFU.
I SEE, I SEE.
SO YOU WANT ME TO LOOK FOR THE EAR WHICH HAD BEEN SNATCHED BY THE CRIMINAL.

YOU...
DO YOU ACCEPT THE JOB?
BUT OF COURSE, SUCH THINGS ARE TSUBAKI THE HOPE-SELLER'S JOB.
WAS IT ANGER, OR GRUDGE, OR ILLUSION
SOMEONE MUST HAVE LET THAT SOWN SEED TO FULLY BLOOM.
FOR WHICHEVER REASON IT HAS BLOOMED
I'M LOOKING FORWARD TO IT, SENSEI

NOTES TO READER

- "AteYa" is someone who can find anything, but unfortunately, I just can't find the proper word to translate it, so I think I'll keep it like that. I'm very sorry for the mess in the first chapter *bow*.
- Term "prostitute" applies to the low-ranked prostitutes, "courtesan" for the high-ranked prostitutes, and "oiran" for the highest of the highest.
- Hachimonji is walking in the figure of 8. It has two types: one which is done inside the building (uchihachimonji), and the other one is done outside (sotohachimonji). There's a good example of how's it actually done in the j-drama called "JIN".
- If you want to learn more about Yoshiwara there's a well-written book by Dr. Cecilia Segawa Seigle, namely >> Yoshiwara: the glittering world of the Japanese courtesan. I read it a lot when I was working on this chapter, thus the delay XD
- Mimi-nashi Houichi... gah it's long! Basically it's the story about a blind man whose ears were cut by a samurai ghost. Read the full story here >> http://www.sacred-texts.com/shi/kwaidan/kwai03.htm

ENTRUSTING THE DIFFICULT PART OF THIS MATTER TO THIS WOMAN...
HMPH
FU FU
SHOULD I BE RELIEVED YET?
RIDDLE.
THIS IS A RIDDLE.
.....
THERE'S NO WAY SHE'D TAKE THIS JOB
SURELY ENOUGH, IF IT WASN'T FOR HER ECCENTRICITY
COMES! IT COMES!! A BIG JOB AFTER AN ETERNITY!!
BRING IT ON, YOU BASTARDDDD!
HEY, CALM DOWN!!

TN: or maybe ~ after a long while?

Chapter 2 - The Woman of Yoshiwara, Kagari

Chapter 2 - The Woman of Yoshiwara, Kaori

HEY, ATEYA NO TSUBAKI-SAN!
More reason to be worried.
THE MURDERED ETSU WAS A BEAUTY, WASN'T SHE??
LOCATE THAT EAR, WILL YOU?
BUT OF COURSE!! THE BIZARRE MURDER OF AN EARLESS BEAUTY!!
WELL, YEAH
YOU SEEM TO BE ENJOYING YOURSELF, BUT...
I'm worried.
DO YOU UNDER-STAND THE SITUATION?
A CASE FREAK.
whisper
THAT'S NOT IT!!
THOUGHT SO!! IT'LL BE BIZARRE IF SHE WASN'T!!
RIDDLES ARE MADE FROM PILES OF REASONS.
FINDING OUT THOSE REASONS IS SOMETHING I LOVE TO DO.

SENSEI, FOR A WHILE NOW, YOU'RE JUST LICKING YOUR SAKE INSTEAD OF GULPING IT DOWN.
I CAN'T BE HELPED THAT ONE'S FACE WILL GET RED WHILE DRINKING, BUT IT DOESN'T MEAN THAT ONE IS WEAK TO SAKE.
SO WHY DO YOU DO THAT!?
SUCH TRIVIAL REASON. .
•SIP•
HEY!

T/N: Nibitashi >> boiled spinach and shitake mushrooms marinated in light soy broth.

NEXT IS THE TOFU
THEN, LET'S CHANGE TO NIBITASHI
NO! HAS SHE READ IT TOO?
NO, NO
I CAN'T MOVE ...!
MY VENTURE INTO YOUR MIND MADE YOU
YOUR THROAT IS AGITATED
GETTING DRY BUT SAKE IS A NO-GO.
YOUR DESIRE OF THE SALAD WHICH HAS A LOT OF MOISTURE WAS CURIOUSLY GUESSED BY ME.
GETTING UNEASY, YOU THEN SET YOUR HAND ON THE TOFU.

T/N: Tofu = = soybean curd

Nibitashi

EVEN WITHOUT KNOWING WHO'S THE OTHER PERSON, THE CULPRIT CERTAINLY HAS A REASON TO DO IT.
THAT'S WHY IT'S INTERESTING.
TO CUT THE BODY IN FRONT OF ONE'S EYES,
TO END THE LIFE.

YIKES
HERE!
AND SO.
Y-YOU BROUGHT SUCH THING WITH YOU?
YOU CALL MY TREASURE "SUCH THING"!?
THESE ARE KAWARA-BANS OVER THE LAST THREE YEARS
Amazing, isn't it?
LOOK AT THE 11TH THE 27TH, AND THE 32ND SHEET FROM THE TOP
THIS TYPE OF "COLLECTOR" IS LIKELY TO CONTINUE
HE JUST CAN'T STOP HIMSELF.
TAP
TAP

IT'S BEYOND ANY DOUBT NOW.
SHE'S A FREAK!!
WHAT KIND OF BRAIN DO YOU ACTUALLY HAVE?
OH, SHUT UP
YOU REMEMBER ALL OF THEM!? YOU MUST BE KIDDING ME!!
OH
"TAP"
THE AMOUNT OF 3 YEARS WORTH OF CASES,
2095 SHEETS IN TOTAL, ISN'T IT?
NOBODY WANTS TO LOOK FOR SOMETHING LIKE THE EAR OF A MURDERED WOMAN, RIGHT?
...I GUESS SHE IS AN EXCEPTION. EVEN THE CIVIL SERVICE HAS GIVEN UP.
THE FLOATING RUMOUR ABOUT THE "EARLESS WOMAN" MURDER.
THE FIRST VICTIM IS THE 16-YEAR OLD DAUGHTER OF NIHONBASHI'S NAKAMURA FAMILY, OMIYO.

THEIR LEFT EARS WERE ALSO SNATCHED.
BESIDES BEING RECKLESSLY STABBED TO DEATH.
OKOU, 18-YEAR OLD DAUGHTER FROM NIHONBASHI'S KAME FAMILY.
EIGHT DAYS LATER, THE SECOND VICTIM OF THE "EARLESS WOMAN" MURDER,
CRUNCH
?
AND THEN, SURPRISINGLY ANOTHER CASE-
CRUNCH
AND THE CULPRIT DID IT AGAIN ON ETSU LAST NIGHT, HUH?
CRUNCH
HABIT, I GUESS?
AH... THE SOUND OF HER CHEWING HER NAILS, HUH?
CRUNCH
CRUNCH
CRUNCH
CRUNCH

SHE MAKES A VERY LOVELY FACE.
どきッ
HECK, IF SHE STAYS SILENT,
IMPUDENT TALK. !!
I CAN'T LET MY GUARD DOWN!
UGH!
WHAT ARE YOU DAY-DREAMING ABOUT?
SENSEI, DO YOU PLAN TO SPEND 80% OF YOUR LIFE UNCONSCIOUSLY?
TWO DAYS AFTER OMIYO'S HORRIBLE INCIDENT, THOUGH LOSING HER EAR...
A GIRL SURVIVED!
NOGIKU, A HAIRDRESSER FROM ASAKUSA, 19 YEARS OLD.
ALTHOUGH THERE'S NO OTHER BIG WOUNDS,
SHE DOESN'T TALK MUCH, PROBABLY DUE TO HER TRAUMA.
THAT MEANS,
ETSU IS THE FOURTH ONE, HUH?

.....
DID THE GIRL HAVE A DIFFICULT DELIVERY?
PARDON?
THAT POOR NOGIKU.
DOES SHE HAVE SOME SPECIAL CIRCUM-STANCES? HER MOTHER?
AH, UMM ..
HER MOTHER DIED GIVING BIRTH TO HER.
HER FATHER THEN IMMEDIATELY ELOPED. NOGIKU HAS NO RELATIVES.
HA!
YOU MEN ONLY THINK ABOUT SPREADING YOUR IDIOTIC CHILDREN EVERYWHERE!!
Lost in anger
AS I PREDICTED!
IDIOT BENEFACTORS!!
Rage
It appears that Tsubaki hates men.

T/N: loincloth >> A strip of cloth worn around the loins

WHY DO YOU...
WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT,
SENSEI!

THE CULPRIT,
THE MOTIVE TO SNATCH THE EARS,
THE EAR'S LOCATION,
AREN'T THEY ALREADY CLEAR?

DON'T SAY SUCH AN IRRESPONSIBLE THING!!
WE HAVEN'T EXAMINED ANYTHING YET, RIGHT?
THAT'S BECAUSE SENSEI IS SUCH A DIMWIT.
SORRY FOR BEING A DIMWIT!!
BUT I WON'T GIVE TROUBLE TO THE WRONG PERSON!!
GIVEN THAT I WAS WRONG, RIGHT?
ざわ

YOU REALLY
HAS SHE FIGURED IT OUT ALREADY? EVERYTHING??
YOU JUST CAN'T SEE EVERYONE'S TRUTH AS A "REALITY"
TO GET ON WITH THE DREAM THE MURDERER SEES, THE EAR THE MURDERER HAD WILL BE SOMETHING TO ABANDON.
HA!
THINGS THAT I CAN'T FIND ARE NAUGHT!
WHY, I'M AN ATEYA AFTER ALL.
HAA
I'M NOT TOO SURE MYSELF...
I'VE FIGURED IT OUT AT LAST!
IF WE DON'T TAKE BACK THE EAR QUICKLY, IT'LL DECAY!!
THIS WOMAN IS NO GOOD!!
SMELLS BOGUS!!

HAVEN'T YOU HEARD ABOUT HER, SHUNGA SENSEI?
A CLOSE FRIEND OF MINE, YOU KNOW.
ASK THE DEITY?
Sounds fishy
Thanks for the food
IT CAN'T BE HELPED THEN.
LET'S ASK THE DEITY.

A SEER FROM YOSHIWARA, "KAGARI"

!
Yoshiwara the red light district,
the largest shogunate-licensed pleasure quarter

Among the brothels, they are ranked as follows: Oo-mise, Chuu-mise, Ko-mise, and continued with Kashi-mise

(T/N: mise = shop; oo = big; chuu = medium; ko = small; kashi = riverbank)

Similarly, the prostitutes are also graded.

From the highest they are Tayuu, Koushi, Sancha, and Umecha.

Of course, in the "Travelling Courtesans" event, those to stride the street in the unique manner called Sotohachimonji manner are Tayuu.

(T/N: Travelling Courtesans >> Courtesans dressed up in magnificent costumes and paraded slowly in the traditional manner known as hachimonji)

OH.

HOUSEN-SENSEI. BRINGING THE PAINTS, IS THERE WORK TO DO?

G-

GOOD EVENING

.....

THAT ONE IS?

M-

M-my

ASSISTANT!

SIMPLY PAINTING WOMEN IS BORING, RIGHT?
ONCE IN A WHILE YOU SHOULD USE YOUR "UNDER BRUSH"!
HAHA
In a place established only for men,
Of course
"UNDER BRUSH" HE SAY
Ke ke
Women can't get in.
I've been here for how many times to draw shunga,
but a place packed with women such as Yoshiwara is more dreadful than beautiful.
"CHUCKLE"
IN REALITY YOU DISLIKE WOMEN, RIGHT

MASTER ...

KAGARI IS A FAMOUS PROSTITUTE.
Prostitutes are women who are sold by her family to the red light district and made to do apprenticeship.
OH? IT'S BEEN A WHILE!
GREET-INGS
But the rumour says,
Kagari's family doesn't owe any debts.

HAH
AH
HAH
HAH
She wasn't sold to come here.
NN
FLM

She was wished to fall.
AAH

BU-HAAAH!
KAGARI IS... HEHE, SHE'S A POPULAR ONE.
WAIT FOR A WHILE, OKAY?
WELCOME, TSUBAKI-SAN.
SNEAKING IN IS NEVER COMFORT-ABLE!
WHAT ARE YOU MAKING SUCH A MENACING FACE FOR?
She threw Kagari into this "hell" called Yoshiwara.
GLANCE
Being Kagari's contractor, Tsubaki arranged her meeting with the landlord. Thus,
?
"Close friend" is astonishing to hear
"Woman's feeling" is something like this, huh?

TSUUUU-CHAN!!
DON'T, KAGARI-SAN!
THAT APPEARANCE IS-
Stark naked...
THAT FREAK MAKES SUCH A GENTLE FACE.
HAHA, YOU LOOKS HEALTHY
TSUU-CHAN!!
Kyaaaa
!
THIS IS THE REASON THAT KAGARI,
WHO'S POPULAR AS "ARGUABLY THE PRETTIEST OR SECOND PRETTIEST BEAUTY", CAN'T BE AN OIRAN.

The growth of this beautiful girl's heart and mind have stopped.
"BOW."
SHUNGA SENSEI.
HOUSEN-SENSEI
WHO?
Only her beauty lives on.
LOVELY
AH...
HOU-SYAN?
STRANGE... I'M NOT AFRAID TO KAGARI.

AH... SUDDENLY MY EYES SEEK REFUGEE...
ソワ
ソワ
THIS MOMENT, YOU CAN SEE THE THREAD OF GOD WITHIN HER.
There's another rumour which boosts Kagari's reputation
CLOSE YOUR RIGHT EYE
EHHH
I'M SORRY, KAGARI. TODAY I DIDN'T COME HERE TO PLAY

THE THREAD OF GOD
THERE'S
CAN I FIND WHAT I'M LOOKING FOR?
AH
AN EAR
E...
PULLS IN THE TRUTH
AR..

THE EAR
IS POSSESSED BY THE EARLESS HOUICHI
CORRECT
THE EARLESS HOUICHI...?
TAP

I'LL COME AGAIN. NEXT TIME, I'LL BRING YOU SWEETS
KAGARI, A CUSTOMER FOR YOU!
WHAT'S THAT?
AH
SWEETS!!
SWEETS!!
PEOPLE SUCH AS SAMURAI AND BIG MERCHANTS WHO HAVE A LOT OF MONEY
COME TO THIS ESTABLISHMENT TO HEAR KAGARI'S ORACLE.

STILL WITH THAT MISERLY FACE?
I WAS BORN WITH THIS FACE
HMM
SENSEI, YOSHIWARA MAY APPEAR AS A "HELL" TO YOU.
BUT THAT PLACE IS A FORTRESS IN ITSELF.
PEOPLE WHO CAN ONLY LIVE IN THAT SAD WORLD ALSO EXIST.

SO, KAGARI'S ABILITY,
WILL NEVER BE ABUSED, Huh...?
WHAT A PAIN, ISN'T IT? REALITY, THAT IS.
WHEREVER THE TRUE HELL MIGHT BE
IT'S GATE EASILY OPENS TO ALL PEOPLE
NOW,
LET'S GO HOUSEN-SENSEI.
WE HAVE TO FIND ETSU'S EAR, RIGHT?
GO? TO WHERE?

THE GATE OF HELL WILL LEAD THE WAY...
BUT, SO THAT OUR EARS WON'T GET EATEN BY THE DEMON.
LET'S BE CAREFUL
SENSEI
じゃっ

Chapter 3 - Riddle of the Reaved Ear

1 Kamiyui ... literally "hair tie" but in this context refers to a hairdressing shop

"THE EAR IS POSSESSED BY THE EARLESS HOUICHI,"
SAID KAGARI, RIGHT?
AH
IF SHE SAID THAT THERE WERE A LOT OF EARLESS PEOPLE, THE TOPIC WOULD BE DIFFERENT THOUGH.

SO THE "EARLESS HOUICHI" POINTS TO THE ONLY PERSON WHO LIVES AFTER HER EAR WAS CUT, NOGIKU...?
HUH?
BUT, THAT WOULD BE...
THAT
WHAT WRONG WITH HER?
THE EAR IS...
EXCUSE US.
!
•SNIFF•
IT STINKS
WHAT MIGHT BE YOUR BUSINESS WITH THIS POOR HAIRDRESSER .?

THIS WOMAN'S
THUMP
NOGIKU
MORE THAN TEN DAYS SHOULD'VE PASSED BY NOW...
THE BLOOD IS STILL OOZING OUT...
IT'S BLEEDING FROM THE UNCONTAINED RESENTMENT OF HER EAR BEING SNATCHED AWAY...
!
YOU'VE GOT IT WRONG, SENSEI.
THE BLOOD IS SURGING OUT FROM THE REAVED EAR

MY JOB IS TO LOOK FOR MISSING THINGS.
UFUFU. GOOD EVENING, NOGIKU-SAN.
I'M TSUBAKI OF ATEYA.
THIS FELLOW IS THE SHUNGA MASTER, HOUSEN-SENSEI.
I WON'T TAKE LONG.
UMM...
WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT? THIS PERSON, FROM LOSING HER EAR.
PARDON MY INTRUSION!
GIVEN THAT,
YOU'D PEACEFULLY RETURN ETSU'S EAR OVER THERE.

D-
DUM-
BASS
SSS!!!
I'M SORRY! SHE'S JUST A FREAK. SHE'S A BIT DRUNK, SO...
Apologize!
DO YOU REALIZE WHAT YOU'VE DONE!? YOU'VE JUST ACCUSED HER OF MURDER!!
I'M NOT DRUNK!
I'M NOT MISTAKEN!!
HOW COULD YOU DECLARE SUCH-
IF YOU SEE THE TRUTH AS A "REALITY"... WILL YOU UNDERSTAND IT?

THE EAR.
I WON'T HAND IT OVER.
IN THERE!?
Y-
YOU
SHE HAS IT!?
FROM THE BEGINNING THIS PERSON HASN'T CONCEALED ANYTHING.
THIS WOMAN...
SAYING SUCH THING BLUNTLY.
DOES SHE KNOW HOW GRAVE THIS MATTER IS?

IN REALITY, THREE OF THE VICTIMS HAVE BEEN KILLED.
THE CULPRIT WOULD'VE SNATCHED THE EAR AFTER SHE KILLED THE VICTIM, RIGHT?
UNLESS THE CULPRIT HAD QUITE OF A SWORD SKILL
NO MATTER HOW YOU LOOK AT IT, IT'S SUSPICIOUS.
The procedure is different
AND YET, FOR SOMEONE TO LIVE DESPITE HER EAR BEING SEVERED.
THERE SHE GOES
IS THAT SO...?
SO THE PERSON HERSELF IS LIKE THIS, HUH?
From just 3 sheets of Kawara ban, she could make it out this far.

BEWILDERED BY THE PITIFUL NOGIKU,
THE TRUTH BECOMES HAZY TO EVERYONE.
ALTHOUGH IT EXISTS INSIDE HER VERY BANDAGE.
THIS PERSON HAS A GOOD LINE OF REASONING.
SHE MOVES HONESTLY ACCORDING TO THAT REASONING
SHE SNATCHED THE EAR BECAUSE SHE DESIRED IT.
SHE SNATCHED ANOTHER TO SATISFY HER DESIRE.
DISCARDING THE EAR SHE DIDN'T NEED,
BUT SUCH REASONING
AND,
ANOTHER ONE..

CAN'T BE APPLIED TO PEOPLE.
Why did she go to that extent
for the "ear"?
MEN FALL IN LOVE BY THEIR EYES
WOMEN FALL IN LOVE BY THEIR EARS,
HUH?

A JOKE OF THE KABUKI ACTORS.
RURIMARU-SAMA.. !!
AH
YE-
YES.
RURI-MARU-SAMA
I'M COUNTING ON YOU AGAIN TODAY, NOGIKU.
THE BAD HABIT OF A HAIR-DRESSER
YOUR OWN HAIR IS SO UNPOLISHED, EH?

RURIMARU-SAMA
RURIMARU-SAMA
!
OH?
THIS IS...
VERY REGRETT-ABLE
My unsightly birthmark.

DUE TO A DIFFICULT DELIVERY
OR EVEN WHILE IN FETUS
IT HAPPENS SOMETIMES
Left alone by my father due to my mother's death.
AREN'T YOU SKILLFUL? FUFU
RURI-MARU...
And now, it happens again due to this accursed ear..
IT'S TICKLISH
RURI-MARU-SAMA..
I WANT THAT WHITE EAR!!
WANT

YOUR EAR
YOUR EAR
HAND OVER YOUR EAR!!

AFTER THE WOUND IS HEALED
THIS EAR IS MINE
TO RURIMARU-SAMA'S SIDE. I'LL..
110

U-
UW AA AA A!!
A.. GAIN.
AA
AAA
THE EAR IS...!!

ATTACHING A DEAD FLESH TO ONE'S BODY
IS A VERY VERY DIFFICULT THING TO DO.
NOT TO MENTION, IT'S ANOTHER PERSON'S FLESH.

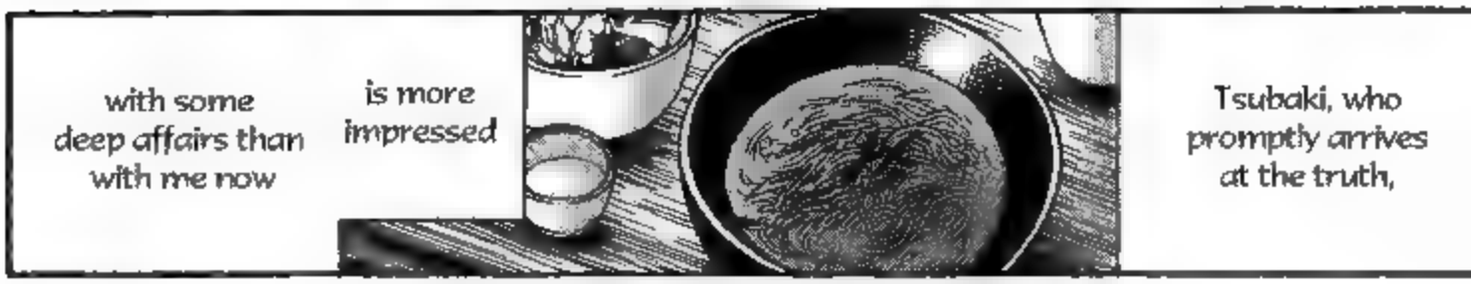
LET'S GO, SENSEI
BUT.
HUH?
AA
AAA
AA
THIS PERSON
Will seek another ear
DO YOU THINK SUCH A MUMMY WILL STINK THIS MUCH?
SHE WON'T KILL ANYMORE.

They are fragile.

NOGIKU WAS BURIED WITH NO ONE TO TEND HER GRAVE.

T/N: Tempura >> deep-fried fish and vegetables in a light batter

BUT, BECAUSE PEOPLE LIVE IN THE SAME REALITY, THEY DON'T HAVE MUCH DIFFERENCE IN THEIR DESIRES
SUCH THAT THE OTHERS WON'T HAVE EYES ON IT, ONE WOULD HIDE HIS PRECIOUS THING


Tsubaki, who promptly arrives at the truth,
is more impressed
with some deep affairs than with me now

WELL, BESIDES THE TENPURA...
I SHOULD ALSO GIVE HER A PRAISE, RIGHT...?
UMM...

MORE IMPOR-TANTLY
WHAT SHOULD WE DO WITH THIS?
!!!
WHAT ARE YOU SUDDENLY ...
BARF DUMBASS !!

I forgot it
ETSU WAS FROM A WEALTHY FAMILY, RIGHT?
WE COULD RECEIVE A LARGE REWARD..
We should quickly return the ear to Etsu's parents
YOU MONEY-GRABBER
THANK YOU
It's Etsu
MY EAR
THANK YOU, THANK YOU
THE PRECIOUS EAR FROM WHICH I HEAR VOICES
A ghost ..

BECAUSE OF YOU, I COULD DRAW A VERY BEAUTIFUL PAINTING
THANKS.
IF EVERYTHING IS SUDDENLY SNATCHED AWAY, STRONG EMOTIONS WILL REMAIN
I WONDER IF THE SAME GOES TO NOGIKU...
ETSU
I'M NO MATCH FOR YOUR LOVER, YOU KNOW!
SENSEI ...
IN JUST A SHORT TIME I DIDN'T MEET YOU, YOU'VE BECOME A GREAT GUY.
RURIMARU-SAMA ♡
FUFU
I'LL VISIT YOU NOW

THAT SURPRISED ME
YEAH, WE SHOULD MAKE SURE THE EAR REACH HER PARENT PROPERLY-
No, no
NOT THAT ONE. IT'S YOU, HOUSEN-SENSE!!
SHE DISAP-PEARED ...
WHAT CAME OUT FROM THAT MISERLY LIPS
WAS A VERY GENTLE, SUBTLE LINE.
WEREN'T YOU BAD WITH WOMAN?
Something like a ghost all of a sudden
!
True.
This very me...
HEH
HEH HEH
It can't be helped. I've come to understand it at last.
?
WHY ARE YOU LAUGHING?

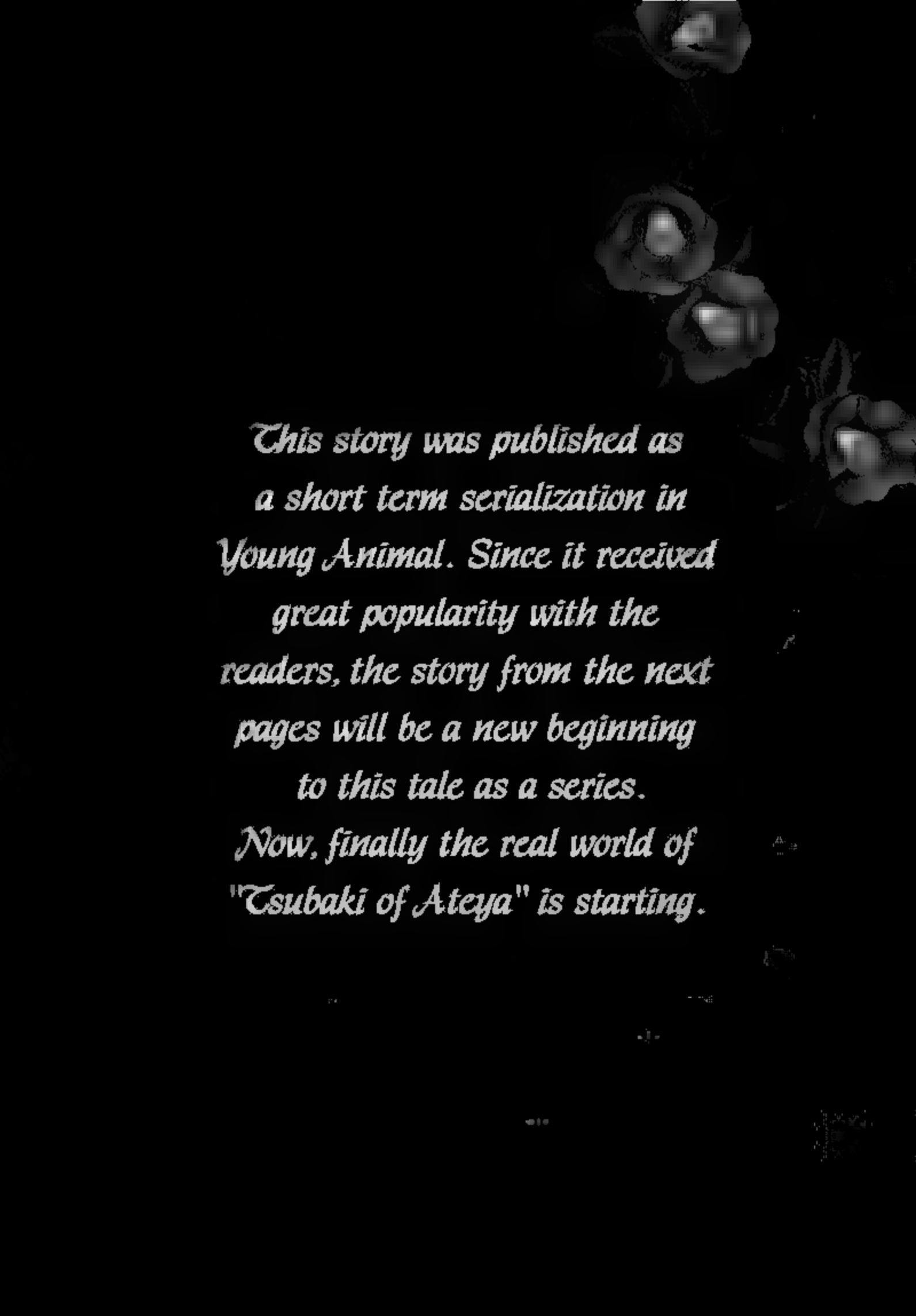
WOMEN ARE
..LIVING THEIR LIVES WITH ALL THEY'VE GOT, AREN'T THEY?

YOU STILL HAVE A LONG WAY TO GO!
SENSEI, YOU DIDN'T EVEN KNOW ABOUT THAT?

SHUT UP!

Just for a bit,
aren't they lovely?
Women, that is.
WHEN YOU MENTION THAT...
UNEXPECTEDLY, YOU'RE NOT AFRAID OF GHOST RUN? SENSEI.

当て屋の椿


This story was published as
a short term serialization in
Young Animal. Since it received
great popularity with the
readers, the story from the next
pages will be a new beginning
to this tale as a series.
Now, finally the real world of
"Tsubaki of Ateya" is starting.

Chapter 4 ◇ The Whereabouts of the Remains (Part 1)

ISN'T THIS GREAT?

IT'S SO ADORABLE!

AS EXPECTED OF THE MASTER OF EROTIC ART.

WELL ... UM,

IT SEEMS TEDIOUS, BUT IT'S MY SIDE JOB.

I AM A PROFESSIONAL.

SOMEONE LOOKS A LITTLE EAGER.

I'LL PAY YOU HEAPS FOR THIS!

THANK YOU.

AH!

IT'S CUTE.

TOSS

REALLY !!?

IT'S CUTE.

YOMO-GI-SAN

UM.. PUB-LISHER.

THE NAME'S YOMOGI!

OH, IS THAT A DRAW-ING OF A CAT?

THIS IS

GUH!

CHUCK

WOMEN WHO CALMLY RUB SALT IN THE WOUND

DON'T KNOW THE MEANING OF THE WORD "TACT"

LISTEN, SENSEI!

YOU'RE BETTER OFF DRAWING WHAT YOU USUALLY DO!

NO QUES-TION ABOUT IT.

HM

AS THE SAYING GOES, "YOU SCRATCH MY BACK AND I'LL SCRATCH YOURS".

WELL,

GAH!

YOUR D*CK SHOULD GET HARD! YOU SHOULD BE AROU-SED !!

I'M

NOT GOOD WITH WOMEN.

RAVISH ME

SEN-SEI, WILL YOU

SAT-IGFY ME? ♡

HM.....

MAY I PUR-CHASE THIS DRAW-ING?

WHAT ABOUT THE ONE WHERE IT CAN'T CATCH A MOUSE

OR THE ONE WHERE IT'S WITH THE SAMURAI?!

THE ONE WITH JUST THE CAT?

WHAT ABOUT THE ONE WHERE IT'S NOT

Mm

NO, DON'T LISTEN TO HER --

SHH!

HE'S FAMOUS FOR HIS EROTIC ART-WORK.

ARE YOU A FAMOUS ARTIST? I DON'T WANT TO BUY IT THEN.

... BY ANY CHANCE,

TH, THIS IS THE FIRST TIME SOMEONE'S WANTED TO BUY MY (NORMAL) DRAWINGS.

EVEN FOR ME, THAT WAS A MEEK RE-SPONSE.

DON'T YOU BELIEVE ME? I'M SORRY --

NO-NO-NO-NO-

I'M SORRY! I'M SORRY!

I DON'T HAVE A LOT OF MONEY --

EVEN THOUGH I'M NOT GOOD WITH WOMEN, SURPRISINGLY,

I'M THE ONE WHO SHOULD BE SORRY!!

I'M SORRY! I'M SORRY!

I SHOUL-DN'T BUY IT.

THIS PIECE MUST BE VERY IM-PORTANT TO YOU!

AT LEAST THINGS CAN'T GET ANY WORSE

WE GET ALONG.

I THINK SHE PROBABLY FEELS THE SAME WAY.

YOU GUYS ARE SO AN-NOYING.

NO, NO, I'M SORRY!

I'M SORRY! I'M SORRY!

NO, I DIDN'T! I'M SORRY!

...UM?

DON'T YOU KNOW YOU'RE NOT SUP-POSED TO WRITE ON IT?

.....

Swish

IT'S JUST THAT I TEACH READING AND WRITING AT THE TEMPLE SCHOOL

I THINK THAT IN ORDER TO REMEMBER THE CHARACTERS EASIER

THEY SHOULD SEE WHAT THEY REPRESENT

AH.

I SEE

IN THAT CASE, I'LL DRAW HOWEVER MANY YOU NEED!

REALLY? PLEASE COME WITH ME!

I'M (ALSO) NOT GOOD WITH KIDS

SORRY TO KEEP YOU WAITING

C'MON KOMA, LET'S GO HOME.

KOMA?

IS THAT A DOG?

YES. HE'S BEEN WITH ME SINCE I WAS A CHILD, PROTECTING ME.

I DON'T CONSIDER HIM FAMILY, THOUGH-- IT'S MORE LIKE HE'S MY OTHER SELF --

I SEE.

I LIKE ANIMALS TOO.

ESPECIALLY DOGS --

Pant Pant

OTHER SELF?

Slob -ber

HE'S UGLY!!

I TOOK A WALK WITH THE STRANGER WHO BOUGHT MY DRAWING

AND HER STRANGE -LOOK- ING DOG.

THAT WASN'T LIKE ME.

IS, IS HE ALWAYS THIS DIF- FICULT?

HEH EH.

BUT, KOMA SEEMS TO LIKE YOU.

EH

REA LLY?

Slob ber

EW

LOOK, HE'S SAYING YES.

SHE SAID HER NAME WAS KIKYOU.

SHE SMILED, EMBAR- RASSED.

WITH THE HELP OF THE PRIEST,

WE'VE BEEN BUILDING THE TEMPLE SCHOOL HERE.

HUH?

EH?

AH!

KOMA?

?

DAMMIT, HE GOT LOOSE --

?

WHAT IS THIS?

SOME-THING DOESN'T FEEL RIGHT--

OWWW !!

SOME BODY HELP --

YOU MON-GREL!

COME TO THINK OF IT

slobber slobber

OWWW !!

A MAD DOG IS BITING THE SOFT, FAIR SKIN OF A DELI-CATE GIRL!

WHAT ARE YOU DOING?

USED TO LIVE IN THIS AREA, TOO

THIS WEIRDO

C'MON, LET'S DISCUSS HOW MUCH!

ヒョイ

THEY BETTER BE PREPARED TO COMPEN-SATE FOR THIS!

WHO'S THE OWNER? WHERE ARE THEY!?

THE MASTER OF EROTIC ART!?

HEY!

TSUBAKI, YOU FAKER!

OH?

WHAT ARE YOU DOING HE--

じっ

じっ

?

YOU MORON --!!!

"STOP IT, THE GODS ARE WATCHING!" "JUST LOOK AT MY (LOWER) BRUSH." HOW BLASPHEMOUS.

SO DIRTY

OH, SHE'S A MODEL FOR AN EROTIC PIECE SET AT A SHRINE I'M SURPRISED

A TEMPLE FULL OF BRATS? YOU DE-SERVE BETTER.

YOU'RE A BEAU-TIFUL LADY.

HMPH.

DON'T SAY WEIRD THINGS LIKE THAT!

HELLO.

THIS IS KI-KYOU -SAN!

SHE'S THE TEACHER OF THIS TEMPLE SCHOOL!

HAH!

I'D RATHER ASK A CAT FOR A FISH THAN ASK THE GODS FOR A FAVOR.

AND WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?

SINCE WHEN DO YOU ASK FAVORS OF THE GODS?

BUT, I WOULDN'T SAY NO TO THE GODS ASKING ME FOR A FAVOR.

HUH?

I, I'M BACK.

WEL-COME BACK, KIKYOU -CHAN.

OH MY, THAT'S A VERY ARRO-GANT THING

TO SAY IN FRONT OF A PRIEST.

Grrr

KO MA?

I'M HERE TO LOOK FOR SOME-THING, SENSEI!

I CAN FIND ANYTHING! I'M "HOPE-SELLER TSUBAKI!"

NO, I DON'T ...

WHAT ON EARTH COULD YOU RE-QUEST --

AH, SO, DO YOU HAVE A RE-QUEST FOR TSUBA-KI?

THIS SHRINE IS MISSING SOME-THING!

COR-RECT.

Slobber

"

YOU SHOULDN'T JOKE AROUND LIKE THAT.

HA HA.

IT'S MISSING SOME-THING --?

WHERE'S THE OTHER STATUE?

PFFFT!

YOU'RE WAY OFF!!

OH, THERE'S ONLY ONE KO-MAINU --

THERE'S NORMALLY TWO...

THE STATUE ON YOUR RIGHT IS CALLED "SHISHI".

THE OTHER ONE IS CALLED "KOMAINU."

WHY DID SHE SAY "CORRECT" IF I'M WRONG?

THE SHISHI HAS ITS MOUTH OPEN BECAUSE IT MAKES AN "A" SOUND, SEE?

THE KOMAINU HAS ITS MOUTH CLOSED BE-CAUSE IT MAKES A "UN" SOUND. IT HAS A SINGLE HORN ON ITS HEAD.

TOGETHER, THEY ARE CALLED "SHISHIKO-MAINU".

AS USUAL, TSUBAKI KNOWS A LOT ABOUT WEIRD STUFF.

COULD THE UN-COMFORTABLE FEELING I GOT WHEN I ARRIVED BEEN DUE TO THE MISSING KOMAINU--?

IT WASN'T MY JOB TO LOOK AFTER THE STATUES.

THE PARISHIONER WAS SUPPOSED TO...

OH!

THIS IS DEFINITELY A STICKY SITUATION.

IF IT WAS STOLEN, THEN THE MAGISTRATE'S OFFICE WILL HANDLE IT. IT'S NOT LIKE THE KOMAINU MOVED ON ITS OW--

YOU'RE WAY OFF YET AGAIN!

THE KOMAINU HERE CAN MOVE ON ITS OWN!

BEARING THEIR FANGS, THEY HOWLED, CLOSING IN ON THE SHRINE.

THE FATHER AND SON FRANTICALLY CONTINUED TO PRAY TO THE GODS, CLINGING TO THEIR ONLY HOPE.

HUU UH?

YES.

IT'S TRUE. RIGHT, KIKYOU-SAN?

NO WAY --

A LONG TIME AGO,

WHILE BEING CHASED BY WOLVES, A FATHER AND HIS SON FLED TO THIS SHRINE.

SITTING ON THEIR PEDESTALS, THE SHISHI AND KOMAINU CAME TO LIFE.

THEY BIT AND KILLED ALL THE WOLVES.

AND THEN,

THE MOUTHS OF THE SHISHI AND KOMAINU GLISTENED IN THE SUN, SLICK WITH THE BLOOD OF THE WOLVES.

AT DAWN, THEY RETURNED TO STONE.

OH,

DON'T BE LIKE THAT. DON'T YOU BELIEVE IN THE GODS AND TRADITIONAL FOLKLORE?

URK!

SO THEN, YOU BELIEVE IT'S TRUE?

THIS IS AN OLD TALE HANDED DOWN AT THIS SHRINE.

HA, SO THERE!

IT'S JUST A LEGEND!

DON'T BE ANGRY!! YOU KNOW THAT TSUBAKI'S EGOTISTICAL!

HA?

STONE CAN'T MOVE.

WHAT A STUPID THING TO ASK.

SEN -SEI.

I HAVE A THEORY,

THERE HAS TO BE A REASON WHY.

IF THE KOMAINU KILLED THE WOLVES AND DISAPPEARED,

YOU COULD SAY THE "REASON" THAT TSUBAKI WANTS IS ONE THAT BENDS THE LAWS OF NATURE.

IF WE DON'T FIND IT SOON, IT WON'T LOOK GOOD ON THE SHRINE.

WE PRO-TECT THEM, THEY PRO-TECT US.

TOGETHER, THEY FORM THE SOUND "AUN"*.

ALTHOUGH THE OTHER ONE HAS DISAP-PEARED,

SHISHI-SAMA IS POWERLESS TO DO ANY-THING ABOUT IT.

*TN: Japanese pronunciation of the word "om", a sound sacred to many religions such as Buddhism, Hinduism, etc.

AH!

SENSEI!

KIKYOU-SENSEI!

KIKYOU-SAN! UM,

I'M OFF TO GO DRAW!

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR HOSPITAL-ITY

C'MON, LET'S GO.

UGH.

EROTIC ART?

?

A SENSEI OF EROTIC ART IS HERE TOO --

WA AAH!

AH!

OKAY,

OKAY!

HA HA,

IF HE COMES BACK, DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT.

OKAY.

OH BOY, WHAT A PAIN.

THAT MAN JUST NOW... IT'S NOT GOOD TO BRING STRANGERS TO THE TEMPLE SCHOOL.

I'M, I'M SORRY !!

Grrr!

UWAH !!

STOP IT, KOMA !!

STOP!

Grrr!

KOMA ??

KO MA!

!

WHAT ?

IT'S NOT A BIG DEAL.

IT SEEMS KOMA

IS IN A BAD MOOD.

KOMA!

WHY DID YOU BITE HIM? YOU'RE NOT IN A BAD MOOD, RIGHT?

ぶんぶん

YOU WERE WAGGING YOUR TAIL A LOT WHEN YOU WERE WITH HOUS-EN-SAN!

EEK!

ブルブル

ぴちゃ

OH, C'M-ON!

--

HEY KOMA.

110

I WAS ABLE TO TALK HAP-PILY WITH A MAN LIKE THAT.

FOR THE FIRST TIME,

PRIEST-SAMA SAYS IT WOULDN'T BE GOOD, BUT,

I WANT TO SEE

HOUSEN -SAN AGAIN ...

Uelp

KO MA?

KOMA ??

HEY, ARE YOU OUT-SIDE?

KOMA ...

KO MA!

WHAT'S WRONG? DID YOU FALL INTO THE POND?

??

HE'S FLOAT-ING?

YOUR YELP SUR-PRISED ...

KO ...

MA ...?

BOO
!

SILENT. AND IT'S COLD

I'M
BROKEN.

UGH

IT HURTS.

HA AA

HUFF

I'M OUT OF BREATH.

HA,

HUFF

I FEEL SICK TO MY STOMACH.

HUFF,

HA

ALI-GH!

IT HURTS.

HA ... GUH ...

HA.

I'M SCARED!

SAVE ME, KOMA!

HA

PROTECT ME LIKE YOU ALWAYS DO. SAVE ME,

SAVE ME!

KOMA ...

HAA
AAH!

OOF, THIS IS HEAVY.

ドサッ

I WAS VERY THOROUGH, KIKYOU-CHAN.

I HAD TO TRAIN ENOUGH TO FINISH HIM IN ONE BLOW.

HUFF

HUFF,

KO MA ...

UGH, PHYSI-CAL LABOR ISN'T REALLY MY THING.

BUT SINCE HE WAS RI-DICULOUSLY STRONG,

I FINALLY FOUND KOMAINU-SAMA. HEE HEE.

AFTER ALL MY HARD WORK,

KO MA ...

HUFF.

KO MA,

KO MA,

HUFF.

KO MA,

HAHAHA!

ALL IT TOOK WAS ONE SNAP OF THE NECK!

I TRAINED TOO MUCH, THOUGH

HIS NAME AND AP-PEARANCE MATCHED PERFECTLY!

KO MA ...

HUFF.

HUFF.

HUFF,

HUFF,

KO MA.

WATCH-ING ME !!

AT YOUR SIDE,

DAMN DOG!! HE WAS ALWAYS, ALWAYS, ALWAYS, ALWAYS,

I'M SO GLAD I KILLED HIM.

DAD, ... MOM ...

HUFF,

HUFF,

SAVE ... KO MA,

NONE OF THEM CAN SAVE YOU.

YOUR PAR-ENTS?

HUH? WHAT'S THAT? KOMA?

I'LL BE YOUR OWNER.

YOU MUST BE LONELY, RIGHT?

HA HA!

WHA ...

LET'S DO IT, LET'S DO IT!

C'MON, HURRY UP!

AGH

AAAAH

I'VE BEEN WAITING FOR THIS, KI-KYOOOJI!

AAAH

ÄH,

COUGH.

GOOD !!

A HA.

GOOD,

HUH ??

ACK!

A,

HYA AA!

AH !

G,

GAH !

ズズ…

ズズ…

HUFF,

HRR,

GAH!

SAVE ME,

I'M SCA-RED!

H,

HUFF.

URGH,

HUFF.

G,

AH!

I GAAAH!

SAVE ME!

ARE YOU REALLY AN ARTIST—?

HUH, WHAT'RE THESE?

TODAY'S KIKYOU-SENSEI'S DAY OFF .....

HA HA HA!

A HA HA.

LIKE YOU KIDS COULD DO BETTER!

OUH!

THAT HURTS

THESE LOOK LIKE SHIT

MAKE THEM MOOOVE

TWITCH

HOUSEN-SAN!!

AH .....

KEEP HIS PROMISE FROM YES-TERDAY AND VISIT ME!!

OF COURSE! DON'T BE RUDE!

OF,

DID SENSEI REALLY ASK FOR YOU TO BE HERE?

CLUNK

...

AH,

KI, KI-KYOU-SAN!

UM ...

YOU MORO-OONS!

HE LIKES YOU—

SENSEI—! HOUSEN'S COME TO SCORE WITH YOU—!

SH, SHUT UP!

I HAVE A FISH, A FLOWER.. STANDARD STUFF

I'VE BROUGHT SOME FOR YOU—

どさり

UM,

HERE ARE THE DRAW-INGS I PROM-ISED.

...PLEASE LEAVE.

OH

OKAY

HA HA.

I WAS REALLY INCON-SIDER-ATE.

I WANTED TO SHOW YOU MY DRAWINGS RIGHT AWAY.

YOU WERE RESTING... SORRY TO INTER-RUPT

I WANTED

TO SEE YOU.

NO, NO.

SEE YOU LATER

TAKE CARE

I CAN'T.

UGH.

U.

BUT I WON'T.

YOU' RE DIRTY.

DIRTY.

DIRTY.

KO MA!

KOMA, SAVE ME!!

KO MA AA,

KO MA ...

NOO!

NO OO O!

AND THEN,

WHILE BEING CHASED BY WOLVES, A FATHER AND HIS SON FLED TO THIS SHRINE

AND THEN,

THE FATHER AND SON FRANTICALLY CONTINUED TO PRAY TO THE GODS, CLINGING TO THEIR ONLY HOPE

A LONG T ME AGO,

SAVE ME! SAVE ME, SAVE ME, SAVE ME,

THE KO-MAINU CAME TO LIFE.

NIGHT TIME AGAIN.

IT'S ...

WHEN IT'S NIGHT TIME,

CREAK

SAVE

SAVE ME ...

はれ

KA HA AA AA H!

THE WOLF COMES.

だんご

Woosh

EEK!

HUFF.

IT WAS AN ACQUAINTANCE OF OURS.

NOTHING MORE.

HUFF

HUFF.

TSUBAKI!

SORRY!

I'M

I'M SORRY!

WHY DID I RUSH TO TELL HER THIS TIME?

TSU BAKI !!

SHE WILL,

UGH

SH ... UT UP.

I WAS OUT LOOKING FOR CLUES YESTER-DAY. I'M BEAT-

BUT TSUB-AKI,

SOME-ONE'S BEEN MUR-DERED!

SHE'LL FIGURE SOME-THING OUT.

THE BODY'S COVERED IN WOU-NDS —

TERRIBLE WOUNDS — FROM HEAD TO TOE!

I'M CON-FIDENT SHE WILL.

LAST NIGHT.

IT HAPPENED AT THE TEMPLE GROUNDS

NEXT TO THE MISSING KOMA-INU'S PEDESTAL.

THE CULPRIT WAS A BEAST!

SO, HEAR ME OUT.

IT LOOKS LIKE

EH WHAT?

IS THIS A DREAM?

IS THIS REAL?

THE PRIEST

WAS BITTEN

TO DEATH BY A BEAST!!

OR IS THIS AN IL-LU-SION

Chapter 6 ❖ The Whereabouts of the Komainu (Part 3)

IT'S DIVINE PUNISHMENT!!

I SAW IT!

THE PRIEST HERE WAS BITTEN TO DEATH BY A BEAST, RIGHT?

AND SHE'S HERE TO SAY THAT IT WAS "DIVINE PUNISHMENT."

LISTEN TO ME!

WHAT'S HER PROBLEM?

HE STRADDLED KOMAINU-SAMA

AND STRANGLED HIM!!

THE PRIEST SNUCK OUT LATE AT NIGHT!!

KOMAINU-SAMA PUNISHED HIM!!

THE PRIEST HAD DEFILED THE SACRED BEAST.

SO KOMAINU-SAMA TURNED MALICIOUS AND MOVED ON HIS OWN.

THE BEAST WILL BE BACK SOON

TALISMANS' WE'LL PLACE TALISMANS AROUND TO KEEP IT AWAY

IDIOT, YOU THINK WE CAN DO THAT?

SHOULD WE HUNT IT DOWN?

HAIL AMI-TABHA*! HAIL AMI-TABHA!

OH, HOW DREAD-FUL!

IF IT WAS DIVINE PUNISHMENT, THEN WOULDN'T A SHINTO PRAYER BE BETTER THAN A BUDDHIST PRAYER?

WHAT DO YOU THINK, SENSEI?

.....

AS WELL AS KEIKYU AND KONA DISAP-PEARED

WE FOUND THE PRIEST'S BODY THAT DAY

...COULD A DOG BITE A PERSON TO DEATH..?

HUH?

THAT MEANS —

IT WASN'T KOMA!!

OW!!

WHAT'RE YOU—

OH.

BACK THEN,

KOMA GROWLED AT THE PRIEST.

IT HAD TO HAVE BEEN KOMA—

YOU'RE... FROM THE TEMPLE SCHOOL...

KOMA WAS WELL-BEHAVED!

BE-SIDES,

YOU IDIOT.

KOMA WOULDN'T DO SOME-THING LIKE THAT!

KOMA'S DEAD

U

NO, HE DIED.

ME TOO! I BURIED THE LEGS!

I HELPED PRIEST-SAMA BURIED HIM!

ME TOO!

I BURIED THE TAIL!

HE'S DEAD!!

I DUNNO.

I DUNNO.

I DUNNO.

YOU'RE ALL FROM THE TEMPLE SCHOOL, RIGHT?

WHY DID KOMA DIE?

OKAY!

COULD YOU GIVE THESE TO KOMA?

HMPH.

REALLY?

SO WE'LL TAKE CARE OF KOMA'S GRAVE BEHIND THE SHRINE.

KIKYOU-SENSEI DISAP-PEARED ...

THAT'S NICE OF YOU.

WHAT WAS IT?

ど"

だ"

だ"

だ"

THEN,

HE COULD'VE BEEN ATTACKED BY A WOLF OR STRAY DOG, BUT THEY LIVE IN THE MOUNTAINS.

THERE'S OVER 1 MILLION PEOPLE PACKED IN THIS TOWN.

COULD A BEAST LIKE THAT BE LIVING HERE?

APPARENTLY.

CAN'T YOU HEAR THEM?

THAT OLD LADY SAYS SHE SAW THE PRIEST DEFILE THE KOMAINU.

ME WAS FURIOUS

KOMAINU-SAMA'S TURNED MALICIOUS

TO PUNISH THE PRIEST.

HE LEFT THE PEDESTAL

WHERE HE WAS ENSHRINED

ARE YOU SERIOUS?

SEARCHING FOR THE KOMAINU IS A PAIN

IT'S NOT WORTH IT

DON'T YOU KNOW, SENSEI?

EVEN MT. FUJI MOVES.

DIDN'T YOU SAY THAT STONE CAN'T MOVE?!

THIS ISN'T LIKE YOU.

I'M NOT TALKING ABOUT NATURAL DISASTERS!!

...THE HELL DO YOU WANT TO KNOW, SENSEI?

I...

WHY—

PLEASE EASE

SHE ACTED STRANGE.

SAY SOME-THING—

LOOKING BACK,

WHY DID KIKYOU-SAN DISAPPEAR WITHOUT A TRACE—

!

YEAH, YEAH.

DON'T ACT LIKE THE STUDENTS FROM THE TEMPLE SCHOOL!!

OH,

WHEN DID YOU TWO START A RELATION-SHIP?

BUT SHE—SHE MIGHT'VE BEEN KIDNAPPED!

KIDNAPPED?

THEN SHE'D BE IN THE YOSHIWARA* OR ANOTHER RED-LIGHT DISTRICT.

EVEN THOUGH THE KILLER'S STILL OUT THERE?

YOU'RE JUST GOING TO DROP IT?

THE PRIEST IS DEAD, SO THE TEMPLE SCHOOL HAS NO FINAN-CIAL SUPPORT ANYMORE.

THIS JOB IS POINTLESS NOW.

* the only government sanctioned red-light district

HOPE-SELLER TSUBAKI!!

TO FIND WHAT'S MISSING, RIGHT?

IT'S YOUR JOB

THEN, MAY I ASK YOU—

YOU MAY.

...

THAT'S RIGHT.

BUT I GET TO CHOOSE WHETHER TO ACCEPT THE JOB OR NOT.

YOU'RE A FOOLISH MAN,

SENSEI.

IF ONLY YOU HAD BETTER JUDGMENT.

I SAID THAT EVERYTHING HAS AN EXPLANATION.

I CAN'T TELL YOU MORE THAN THAT.

THERE'S A PERFECTLY GOOD REASON

WHY SOMEONE WOULD WANT TO DISAPPEAR.

YOU DON'T WANT TO KNOW THE REST.

BUT DO THEY

WANT YOU TO KNOW —?

THAT'S NOT WEIRD.

IT'S NOT WEIRD FOR A GUY TO VISIT'

I PROMISED HER SOME DRAWINGS.

I WENT TO KIKYOU'S PARENTS' HOUSE

I WAS STUB-BORN

ACCORDING TO THE KIDS, IT SHOULD BE AROUND HERE.

Kikyou

THEN SHE SHOULD BE HAPPY, AND

HER GUARDIAN PASSED AWAY, SO SHE HAS TO BE BACK AT HER PAR-ENTS' PLACE

IF SHE'S GOTTEN OVER KOMA'S DEATH,

THIS IS THEIR HOUSE

IT'S IN REALLY BAD SHAPE.

HUH?

WHADD-AYA WANT?

UGH

IT REEKS OF SAKE.

SAKE AGAIN? STOP BUYING THAT STUFF!!

SHUD-DUP!!

Bang

KAH.

I DUNNO WHO THAT IS.

LEAVE!

KI-KYOU?

UH...UM, I'M AN AC-QUAINT-ANCE OF KIKYOU-SAN—

NOT ANY-MORE!

THAT'S NOT IT. YOU HAVE A DAUGH-TER, RIGHT?

OH, I SEE. YOU WORK THERE.

I HAVE NO IDEA WHAT HAPPENED.

WHAT?

THE SHRINE —

*TN: Obsolete unit of currency. 1 ryou = 120,000–130,000 yen

KA KA KAK AH!

I CAN DO WHATEVER I WANT WITH THAT KINDA MONEY!!

FOR 2 RYOU* !! HA-HA, 2 RYOU!

THE PRIEST TOOK HER

SHUD-DUP! GIMME SOME.

YOU IDIOT.

YOU'VE HAD TOO MUCH TO DRINK...

POUR ME SOME SAKE, WOMAN! SAKE!

HE PAID THAT MUCH, JUST FOR AN ASSIS-TANT FOR THE TEMPLE SCHOOL ?

2 RYOU?? THAT'S A LOT!

WAS KIKYOU-SAN AWARE HE—

... WAS,

I TEACH READING AND WRITING AT THE TEMPLE SCHOOL.

WHY WOULD A WOMAN WHO WAS RAISED BY WOLVES GROWL AT ME?

I DON'T GET IT AT ALL, YOU SOLD YOUR DAUGHTER TO A MAN?

HOW DID I NOT NOTICE ...

I DON'T.

THE WOMAN FROM YESTERDAY KEPT PESTERING ME ABOUT KANEKA TOO!

SO WHAT ?!!

SHUT UP!!

I KNOW NOTHIN'!

NOTHIN'!!

THE WOMAN FROM YESTERDAY—

DON'T COME BACK!!

THAT IS HIS ONE,

HIS DUTY IS TO PROTECT.

HE IS THE MESSENGER, AND THE GUARDIAN OF THE GODS;

AND ONLY PLEASURE.

Hu.

Hu.

UGH, "KIKYOU" THIS AND "KIKYOU" THAT!

YOU'VE GOT SOME NERVE IF YOU THINK I'LL BUY HER BACK!

HUH?

I KNOW, BUT OUR MONEY WILL RUN OUT SOON.

WE COULD SELL HER AGAIN?

DO YOU THINK

Bang Bang

WHICH WILL PAY US MORE ?

THE YOSHI-WARA OR SOME OTHER RED-LIGHT DISTRICT

BAH, DO YOU WANNA DIE?!!

I THOUGHT I TOLD YOU NOT TO COME BACK!

DAM-MIT!

... ARE YOU THE MAN FROM BEFORE ...?

HELL-PROTECT-

AH! AAA A

Hi

GYA

WITH CLAWS

STAINED WITH THE BLOOD OF WOLVES.

hu.

Grr!

Scoop

THE CHILDREN HELPED BURIED HIM THEY DON'T KNOW HOW EXACTLY HE DIED.

BECAUSE

Scoop

Scoop

WHY? WOULD A HEALTHY DOG SUDDENLY DIE?

WHY?

HAH

HAH

HAH

COULD THE PRIEST HAVE BEEN HIDING

HAH

THEY HAVEN'T SEEN THE BODY.

HAH

BEING A HOPE-SELLER

REALLY SUCKS!

THE CRIMINAL EVIDENCE?

AH —!

SON OF A BITCH!

DAM MIT!

DAM MIT!

Chapter 7 ◆ The Whereabouts of the Kamakiri Part 6!

BANG

BANG

BANG

SHE'S NOT HERE —?

SIGN HOPE SHOP

I WENT OUT YESTERDAY. I'M BEAT.

SHE KNEW THAT KIKYOU HAD BEEN SOLD TO THE PRIEST.

THE WOMAN FROM YESTERDAY KEPT—

TSUBAKI KNEW.

SIGH.

HE FELT THAT THE PRIEST WAS A THREAT, AND SO HE BARED HIS FANGS.

KOMA DESPER-ATELY PROTECTED HIS INNO-CENT OWNER.

...TSU-BAKI—

KNOWS EVERY-THING, DOESN'T SHE?

WHERE'S KIKYOU? SHE'S DEFENS-LESS. WHO'S PROTECT-ING HER?

HE COULDN'T HAVE. THE PRIEST BURIED HIM.

DOES THAT MEAN KOMA KILLED THE PRIEST?

ARGUE

HE'S KI-KYOU'S!

HOUSEN BELONGS TO KIKYOU!!

RINSE AND REPEAT.

YOU'RE LATE, TSUBAKI ...

WHERE'D SHE WANDER OFF TO?

ARGUE. MAKE UP.

THEN ARGUE AGAIN.

!

SENSEI
—

!!!

TSUB-
AKI?

Twitch

GRR

!

WHOA!

Oww!

Hu

Hu

WELL, WELL, YOU SAVED THE GREAT HOPE-SELLER

THE TROUBLE OF LOOKING FOR YOU!

YOU WENT TO THE TEMPLE SCHOOL.

WHY DIDN'T YOU STOP BEING THE PROTEC-TOR?

!

THIS IS STRANGE.

Hu

Hu

THEY— CAME TO KILL SOMEONE ELSE, HUH?

BUT THERE WASN'T A GRAVE-STONE.

YOU WENT TO LOOK FOR HIS GRAVE,

GRR

...

LONELY BEING BY YOUR-SELF.

YOU FELT

WHO ARE YOU?

KOMA'S DEAD.

GRR

HE CAN'T PROTECT ANYONE ANYMORE.

WHO ARE YOU?!?!

Huu

Hu

Hu

NOW THAT YOU'RE ONE, DOESN'T THAT MEAN SOMETHING TO YOU?

...TWO SOUNDS FORM "AUN".

TSUB-AKI...

BOTH YOU AND KOMA.

YOU'RE EX-HAUSTED, RIGHT?

WON'T YOU REST FOR A BIT?

Hyu

Hyu

Hyu

HOLL..
SEN

SA
...

Hyu.

KIKYOU?

!

I DIDN'T HESITATE.

IT MIGHT BE A LIE

TO SAY I WASN'T SCARED.

BUT THAT WAS A PATHETIC EXCUSE.

...THE COLOR

OF THE PAINT LEFT ON HOUSEN-SAN'S FINGERTIPS IS BEAUTIFUL—

FACE

WELL

KIKYOU-SA...?

KIKYOU!

MY HANDS ARE STAINED WITH BLOOD. I HAVE TO STOP MYSELF.

MY CHAINS!

THEY WERE

Hyu

Hyu

I COULDN'T PROTECT YOU

KOMA.

KIKYOU-SAN, UM—

HERE ARE SOME PAINTINGS I DID.

BUT NOW, WE'LL BE TOGETHER FOREVER.

KOMA, I'M SORRY.

I WANTED TO SEE YOU.

Hyu

Hyu

KIKY OU!

NO! LOOK OUT!

STOP!

WE'LL PROTECT ONE ANOTHER.

TOGETHER,

WE FORM!

"ALIN"

SOMEONE GET A BOAT! A WOMAN JUMPED INTO THE RIVER!!

STOP IT!

NOOO!

KIKYOU!

KIKYOU!

WE DIDN'T FIND HER BODY.

SO I LET MYSELF IMAGINE

THAT SHE WAS ALIVE SOME-WHERE.

THE

Plop

KIKYOU HAD NO OTHER CHOICE.

THERE!

TSUBAKI TOLD ME THAT

... AND YET,

SHE COULDN'T ACCEPT KOMA'S DEATH.

SHE WAS SO AFRAID, AND WANTED PROTEC-TION—

AND YET,

SHE HAD BEEN ATTACKED AND DEFILED. ONLY KOMA COULD PROTECT HER NOW.

SHE LOST HER LIMBS WITH KOYA

BY PUSHING HERSELF WITH HER FANGS

SHE GAINED HER STRENGTH

THUS RESURRECTED, HE PROTECTED HER.

HUH?

BACK THEN.

WHY DIDN'T SHE TAKE MY HAND?

KEY OU

I HELD MY HAND OUT TO HER—

BUT I DIDN'T HAVE WHAT SHE WANTED.

...WHO KNOWS.

I DIDN'T HAVE IT,

I GUESS.

.....

TSUB-AKI.

WHAT DID YOU THROW JUST—

WHAT ??

THESE PEBBLES ARE THE KOMAINU?

THIS IS THE KOMAINU.

IT'S A FRAG-MENT OF SOME STATUE ?

THE SHATTERED PIECES OF THE KOMAINU WERE MIXED WITH THE GRAVEL AROUND ITS PEDESTAL.

THOUGHT THIS WAS A GOOD WAY TO HIDE A STATUE.

LOOKS LIKE THE INCOMPE-TENT PRIEST

IT'S OKAY!

IDIOT, YOU SHOULD BRING IT BACK TO—

AH, BUT! IT WAS YOUR JOB TO FIND THE KOMAINU, RIGHT?

IT'S OKAY.

……

IF THE KOMAINU IS GONE, THEN THE CURSE WILL STAY.

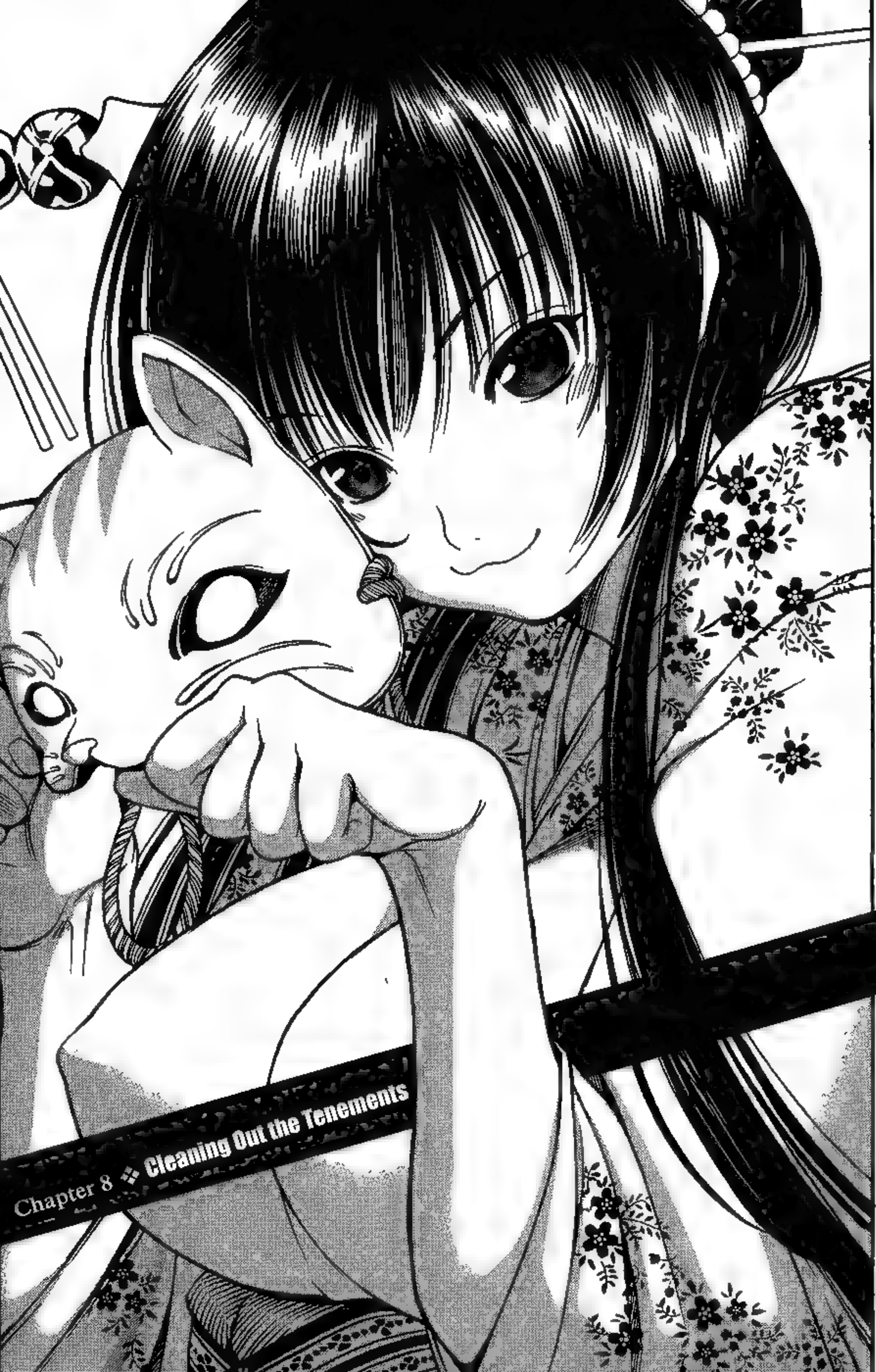
IF THE KOMAINU IS RETURNED, THEN THE CURSE OF THE PRIEST'S MURDERER WILL BE BROKEN.

KIKYOU WAS A BEAUTIFUL WOMAN,

WASN'T SHE?

KIKYOU WOULD SMILE IN EMBARRASSMENT.

HER CHARMING SMILE IS ALL THAT'S LEFT OF HER.



Chapter 8 ❖ Cleaning Out the Tenements

AT THE TIME,

BO

I WAS CON-SIDERABLY DEPRESSED.

BUT I

A NORMAL GUY

WAS EXTREMELY ABNORMAL.

WOULD'VE RUSHED TO THE RED-LIGHT DISTRICT YOSHIWARA TO CHEER HIMSELF UP.

I FELT COMPLETELY APATHETIC.

THERE WAS A GAPING HOLE THAT COULDN'T BE FILLED.

IT'S MORNING ...?

CHEEP

CHEEP

のそっ

TIME FOR BED ...

GOOD EVENING INGING ING

GOOD MOO ORN- ING ING ING ING!

Shock

WHA ...

WHAT WAS THAT?

FIVE DAYS' WORTH OF GREETINGS, SENSEI!

HEL—

NEVER MIND! FORGET IT!!

RRGH!

YOU FORGOT "HELLO". IDIOT.

.....

C'MON, SENSEI!

WHAT THE HELL DO YOU WANT?

LEAVE ME ALONE!!

I DON'T HAVE BUSINESS WITH YOU, BUT THIS GUY DOES.

UA A A!

WHA

C'MON!

WHAT ARE YOU ...

WHA.

C'MON, C'MON, C'MON, C'MON,

CLEANING OF THE TENEMENTS!

IT'S TIME FOR THE ROUTINE

TO SILENTLY SERVE THE SOVEREIGN AND THE NATION IS A TRUE MAN'S GREATEST DESIRE.

IF YOU QUESTION THIS... I SHALL CUT YOU OPEN!!

AIR IT OUT!

C'MON EVERY-ONE, LET'S OPEN THE DOOR TO THIS DUMP!

I DIDN'T HEAR ANYTHING ABOUT IT!!

HOW, HOW'S THAT TODAY!?

A FOOLISH QUESTION, HOUSEN.

BUT NO ONE SEES THE TIP OF MY SWORD AND LIVES—

I MAY BE A RONIN NOW.

HE'S UPSET BECAUSE THIS IS THE DAY THEY DISTRIBUTE FOOD

Uu ugh,

I am indebt-ed to you.

HEY MOM, GO AHEAD AND EAT FIRST!

YANAGI-SAN COLLAPSED ———!!

AH, THAT'S THE RONIN FOR YOU.

BECAUSE YOU SHOUTED!

YOU LITTLE... YOU'RE NOT GONNA HELP.

ぎゅ

HEY, HEY, IS SHE REALLY INJURED?

ぱん

OWW. MY INJURY HURTS.

GO ON, MOVE! MOVE!

THE RULES OF THETEN-EMENT ARE GREATER THAN SHOGUN-SAMA'S.

WHAT ABOUT YOU?

OH!

THIS IS THE PERFECT CHANCE TO SNEAK INTO HER ROOM AT NIGHT, HUH?

Kehehe

WABI-SUKE ...

STOP THAT! YOU'RE WAY TOO CREEPY!

TSUBAKI'S ASS IS QUITE NICE.

Kehehe

Kehehe

YOU'LL BE EVICTED IF YOU DON'T HELP OUT.

IT'S EVERYONE'S RESPONSI-BILITY TO CLEAN THEM.

IN A TENE-MENT, THE BATHROOM, GARBAGE, LAUNDRY WELL— EVERYTHING— IS PUBLIC.

OH, HOUSEN-SENSEI. THANK YOU FOR YOUR HARD WORK.

THERE'S A PROFES-SIONAL SAMISEN PLAYER, TOO.

A CARPEN-TER, A CRAFTS-MEN, A RONIN, AND AN ARTIST ...LIKE ME.

THERE ARE ALL SORTS OF RESIDENTS HERE:

I WILL GREET HANABISHI-DONO—!!

H E L L O

WHEN EVERYONE'S CROWDED TOGETHER IN A DUMP LIKE THIS,

THE RELA-TIONSHIPS BETWEEN PEOPLE ARE COMPLICATED.

.....

Shine

HM?

I'M GONNA QUICKLY FINISH THIS, GO BACK TO MY ROOM, AND SLEEP

THIS IS...

MONEY, HUH?

Kehehehe

GIMME, GIMME, GIMME,

MONEY !!

HOW'D YOU GET THOSE BRUISES?

GIMME

ハーハー
ハーハー
ハーハー
MONEY.
MONEY.
MONEY.
OW. UGH, HOW DOES ONE DESCRIBE THIS PAIN?
EXCITED, ISN'T SHE? GEEZ.
IT'S A TRAIL OF MONEY.
WOOOW!
YOU'RE GONNA GO BACK TO YOUR ROOM SOON, RIGHT? YOU CAN LEAVE NOW, HOUSEN.
SHUT UP!
MONEY.
MONEY.
NO, IT DOESN'T.
KEHE HEHE. EVEN BURIED TREASURE FLOWS THROUGH HERE?

SKILLED CRAFTSMEN ARE KIDNAPPED AND FORCED TO WORK, DAY AND NIGHT.

IF YOU TRY TO RUN AWAY, YOUR LEGS ARE CUT OFF AS PUNISHMENT.

WHAT WE HAVE HERE IS ILLEGAL, COUNTERFEIT CURRENCY!

THEN YOU FURIOUSLY MAKE COUNTERFEIT CURRENCY IN THE DARKNESS, UNTIL YOU DIE.

AFTERWARDS, THEY MAKE YOU ADDICTED TO OPIUM.

YOU'RE SCARY

HUH?

ME?

ぶるる

I'M SCARED, SENSEI!

MOUSE, HUH? KEHEHE.

MOUSE? SUCH A CHILD YOU ARE, SENSEI.

SHUT UP!!

WHA, WHAT IS IT!?

A LITTLE MOUSE IN THE TENEMENT LEFT SOME OF THE MONEY IT GATHERED HERE, OR SOMETHING LIKE THAT, DIDN'T IT?

.....

IT CONTINUES UNDER THAT SHOP.

LET'S DO THIS.

YOU'RE GOING?

IT'S FUN TRYING TO COME UP WITH AN EXPLANATION, ISN'T IT?

わく わく

THIS GUY NEVER LEARNS

I CAN'T RESIST. HEY, TSUBAKI.

YOU CAN LEAVE, HOUSEN.

TCH

I SEE.

FROM THE OUTSIDE, IT DOESN'T LOOK THAT WAY.

THIS BELONGS TO A WHOLESALE SUNDRIES DEALER

IT CAME FROM ABOVE —

AH!

IT LOOKS TERRI-BLE—

Oooh!

??

We should count how much—

Hey, Boss.

Boss

Clank

Clank

WE'LL DO THAT LATER.

Haa

Ohh

ちゃり

Ahh

ちゃり

Plop

Plop

Boss, give me more

Ahh.

WELL, THIS SHOP IS GONNA GO BANKRUPT.

GROWL

HERE.

!

COME TO THINK OF IT, I'VE BARELY EATEN ANY-THING THESE PAST 5 DAYS.

SIGH.

THA.

THANKS.

Z

Z

Z

Z

THANK YOU FOR YOUR HARD WORK.

NO, UM, I WOULDN'T SAY I HATE THEM—

OH, DO YOU STILL HATE WOMEN?

I'M JUST NOT GOOD AT DEALING WITH THEM.

MUMBLE

THAT'S WHY YANAGI-SAN HIT ME.

MUMBLE

!

HOW'S THE MOLD?

PFFT!

SAY, HEISEN SAN?

NO, THE RICE BALLS DON'T HAVE ANY MOLD.

...?

THERE, THERE- THERE ISN'T!

THERE ISN'T ANY MOLD!

DURING THE CLEANING TSUBAKI-CHAN FOUND MOLD GROWING IN YOUR PLACE. SO...

BY "MOLD", SHE MEANS ME?

MAYBE

WHY WOULD THAT TSUBAKI ...

IN THE CRUDEST WAY POSSIBLE, TOO.

HOU SEN,

WHAT'D YOU DO TO MAKE HER SO NICE TO YOU!?

ボス ボス

?

HA HA!

HA HA HA HA

HA HA HA HA

SHE TOTALLY CHEERED ME UP.

PFFT.

THIS FEELS JUST RIGHT FOR SOMEONE

WHOA!

YOU BAS-TARD

BUT, INSTEAD OF HALF-HEARTED KIND WORDS,

AS PATHETIC AND STRANGE AS ME.

BUT I COULDN'T PUT IT INTO WORDS EASILY.

I WANTED TO SAY SOME-THING TO THE SHORT-ATTENTION SPANNED ECCENTRIC,

I TRIED TO EXPRESS IT IN DRAWING.

WHAT'S THIS?

WHEN THE CAMELLIA'S FLOWERS FALL OFF, THEY DO SO SUDDENLY AND RANDOMLY.

THEY'RE SAID TO BE UNLUCKY.

DID YOU KNOW, SENSEI?

ABSOLUTELY BEAUTIFUL.

BUT, I LIKE HOW BEAUTIFUL THESE ARE.

TSUBAKI SAID THE WORDS THAT I COULDN'T.

WITHOUT HESITATING,

THANK YOU, SENSEI.

"BEAUTIFUL" MY ASS...

プル プル

BUT SHE SOLD IT THE NEXT DAY.

初出一覧

第一話　椿（ツバキ）、登場 …… ヤングアニマル2007年24号
第二話　吉原の女、簪（かんざし） …… ヤングアニマル2008年1号
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JETS COMICS 604

当て屋の椿（ツバキ）1

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THE BONFIRE IS DANGER-OUS!!

WHAT WILL TSUBAKI DO...!?

A BON-FIRE ...

THE PUPPET PLAY BEGINS!!

THE TRUTH BEHIND

THE SERIAL MURDERS IS...!?

ON SALE EARLY SUMMER 2009!!

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重野なおき

のの美捜査中！全5巻

竹内じゅんや

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竹本泉

トゥインクルスターのんのんじー

トゥインクルスターのんのんじーEX

玉越博幸

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